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CHDS alum named Commissioner of Tennessee prison system

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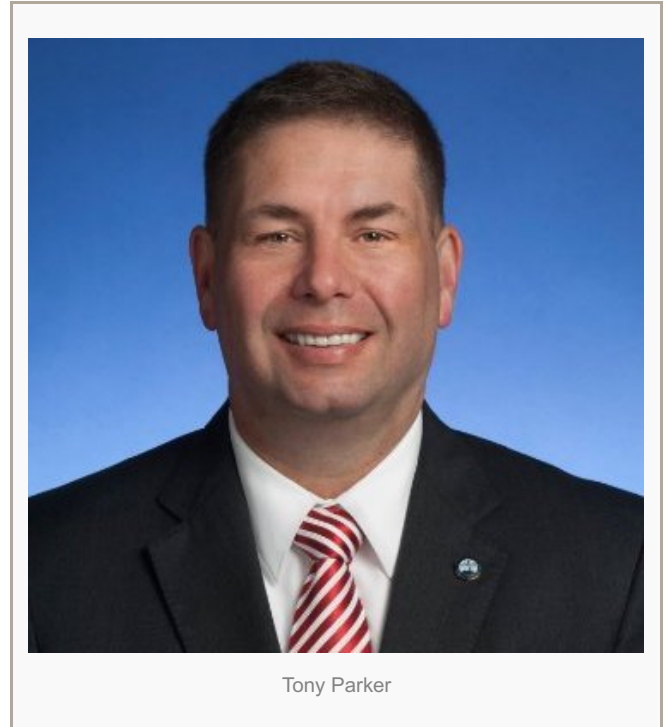
Tony Parker learned his new job from the ground up.

The Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security master's degree graduate was named Commissioner of the [Tennessee Department of Correction](#) effective June 19.

Parker began his career in 1983 as a Corrections Officer and progressed through the ranks before serving as Warden at two facilities and becoming Assistant Commissioner in 2012. Along the way he complemented his track record with education, first an Associate's degree in 1993 and a bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee-Martin in 1995. He completed a Master of Arts from NPS-CHDS in 2013.

"I am honored and grateful that Governor Haslam has asked me to serve as their commissioner," Parker, 52, said in a news release.

[Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam](#) cited Parker's academic accomplishments along with his experience when announcing the promotion.



"Tony Parker has spent his life dedicated to serving our state through the correctional system. He put himself through school, earning his associate, bachelor's and master's degrees while being promoted through the ranks of the Department of Correction," Haslam said in a press release. "Tony understands the department and its mission from top to bottom, and I have no doubt he will do an outstanding job leading it."

Parker's CHDS master's degree thesis, "[Establishing a Deradicalization/Disengagement Model for America's Correctional Facilities for Countering Prison Radicalization](#)," resulted in Parker testifying on the topic before the House Committee on Homeland Security Committee in October 2015.

The thesis analyzed long-running de-radicalization programs in Singapore and Saudi Arabia that aim to prevent extremist behavior once inmates are released from custody. Parker crafted recommendations for American prisons that include greater vetting and training of clergy who have access to prisoners, counseling programs while incarcerated, enlisting family involvement and follow-up monitoring after a prisoner is released, among other measures.

"I was interested in prison radicalization and, what were the contributing factors within the correctional environment," Parker said in an [article posted on the CHDS website](#) last October. "An incarcerated individual who may become radicalized in prison presents a homeland security concern. We have to realize that 95 percent of these people are going to return to our communities at some point."

The Tennessee corrections system comprises 14 prisons housing approximately 21,000 offenders with more than 6,500 employees. The agency supervises about 79,000 offenders on probation, parole or community corrections.

